

SS. Sergius & Herman of Valaam
Russian Orthodox Chapel, Father
Gerasim's Chapel
Monk's Lagoon
Spruce Island
Alaska

HABS No. AK-52A

HABS
AK,
12-MOLA,
1-A-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

SS. SERGIUS AND HERMAN OF VALAAM
RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
FR. GERASIM'S CHAPEL

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Location: Less than .5 mile from shore, Monk's Lagoon, Spruce Island, near Kodiak Island, Alaska.

Significance: This tiny chapel, built on the site of Fr. Herman's cell, is the work of a man who devoted his life to the memory of Fr. Herman.

Description: This small, one-story building measures 12'-4" x 14'-3". Constructed of wood frame, clad in novelty siding which is beveled on both edges, it is painted white with aqua trim. The gable roof is covered with wood shingles, which are now covered with moss. A small shed roof shelters the door. The windows -- one on the north side and one on the south -- have one-over-one-light sash with a plain board surround. There is also a one-light window in the east gable. The building is topped by a cross.

The interior is one room, with tongue-and-groove boards on the floor and plywood walls. There are icons throughout, with a heavily decorated altar wall on the east.

History: Father Gerasim (1888-1966), a monk who devoted his life to the memory of Fr. Herman, had this simple chapel built on the site of Fr. Herman's cell. Born in Russia, Fr. Gerasim came to Alaska in 1915. After short stints in Sitka and Kodiak, he was assigned to Afognak for eighteen years. He moved to Spruce Island in 1935, and villagers from Ouzinkie on the other side of the island built this chapel for him soon after. As guardian of Fr. Herman's memory, Fr. Gerasim cared for his grave and the chapel over it, and prevented his remains from being removed off the island. He lived here until 1965.

Sources: Parsells, Father Yakov. "The Ouzinkie/Russian Orthodox Church." Orthodox Alaska 7 (July 1978): 52-55.

Rose, Fr. Seraphim. "Father Gerasim: Guardian of St. Herman of Alaska." Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1983.

Historian: Alison K. Hoagland, HABS Historian, 1989.